

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Day of the Frog

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

March at my daughter's preschool, is reptiles and amphibians month. There is a bit of pride when someone asks my daughter what she's studying at school and she says "Reptiles and amphibians." At one level, the pride comes simply from hearing my three-year old say a word like amphibians. Of course, there's a deeper pride when she begins to name the distinguishing traits of the vertebrate classes— fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Perhaps giving the jar of tadpoles a prominent place in the middle of our dining room table each spring is beginning to pay off.

Frogs may not be quite as majestic as an eagle or as cuddly as a koala bear, but they're important too, and they're suffered. In recent years frogs around the world have been under assault – habitat destruction, pollution, and the infamous chytrid fungus – an often fatal skin disease first identified in 1998 that's linked to massive frogs die-offs in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Africa.

April 28th is billed as Save the Frogs Day by Save the Frogs, a non-profit dedicated to amphibian conservation. April 28th also coincides with the time many of us are busy getting lawns and gardens into shape. One of the simplest things we can do to help frog populations in our area is simply limit the amount of chemical pesticides and fertilizers we use on our land. During rainstorms, pesticides and fertilizers can easily wash off our lawn and down storm drains to streams and wetlands and into contact with frogs.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.